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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 000952

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FOR NEA/ARP

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ELAB](#) [AE](#) [SA](#) [QA](#) [KU](#) [TIP](#)
SUBJECT: UN LABOR CONFERENCE IN KUWAIT IN DOUBT, MAY MOVE
TO UAE OR SAUDI

REF: KUWAIT 359

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) The Ambassador spoke with UN Resident Representative Valerie Cliff by telephone on June 16. He urged the ILO (International Labor Organization) positions on TIP and the labor situation in the region be made clear, since local officials are claiming that the ILO has not criticized local labor practices.

12. (C) Cliff said that attempts by UNDP and other UN agencies to support a joint effort by the GCC and sending countries to get a handle on expatriate labor issues were not going well. She described the recent Expatriate Labor Forum in Qatar as "a show," with no participation by sending countries. The Forum is slated to meet again in Kuwait in December. However, because the "forum" exercise had been "somewhat hijacked in terms of output," she decided to return funds to the Dutch Embassy in Kuwait, which had provided money to bring legal experts and others to the upcoming forum to help build GCC consensus on specific principles for treatment of expatriate labor. She opined that building such a consensus would not be possible given the constraints the GCC has put on the Expatriate Labor Forum. Cliff said the GOK does not appear interested in UN agencies playing a meaningful advisory role for the conference.

13. (C) A UNDP staffer told PolOff on June 18 that the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor has been dragging its feet since the cabinet dissolution of early March. She said the ministry had promised a meeting with UNDP the week of June 24, but in further communications with PolOff, Cliff expressed doubt as to whether the forum would take place in Kuwait at all. UNDP Assistant Director Mohammad Al-Nassery told PolOff on June 19 that Nada Al-Nashif, ILO's new regional director, also is trying to move the forum to the UAE or Saudi Arabia. According to Al-Nassery, Al-Nashif sees the UAE as more open to airing the real problems of workers, and she views holding such a conference in Saudi Arabia as a political victory in and of itself.

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LeBaron